

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 998

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPAS (WRIGHT, PAULO STUART) BR

SUBJECT: DISAPPEARANCE OF PAULO STUART WRIGHT

REF: BRASILIA 877

1. CONGEN SAO PAULO TRANSMITTED ON FEBRUARY 8 THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS MADE TO CONGEN POLITICAL OFFICERS FEBRUARY 7 BY JOSE CARLOS DIAS, A PROMINENT SAO PAULO CRIMINAL ATTORNEY WHO UNSUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT COURTACTION LAST NOVEMBER AIMED AT COMPELLING MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO PRODUCE PAULO STUART WRIGHT OR TO REVEAL HIS WHEREABOUTS.

2. QUOTE WHILE PROFESSING A LACK OF FIRM INFORMATION CONCERNING WRIGHT'S FATE, DIAS STATED THAT A NUMBER OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL FACTORS HAD LED HIM TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WRIGHT DIED AS A RESULT OF TORTURE SOMETIME IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER. AMONG THE DIVERSE FRAGMENTS OF ADMITTEDLY SUBJECTIVE INFORMATION WHICH HE SAID IMPELLED HIM TO THIS VIEW DIAS CITED WRIGHT'S REPUTE AS AN EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG-WILLED, DEDICATED INDIVIDUAL PREPARED TO ENDURE, WITHOUT REVEALING THE INFORMATION BEING DEMANDED OF HIM, THE STANDARD REGIME INTERROGATION PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN THESE CASES BEYOND THE POINT FROM WHICH RECOVERY WOULD STILL BE PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE. ANOTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL FACTOR WAS THE MANNER IN WHICH THE OFFICIAL CURTAIN OF SILENCE WAS DRAWN OVER THE WRIGHT CASE. ACCORDING TO DIAS, AUTHORITIES BEGAN TO CLAM UP SOMETIME AFTER WRIGHT'S CAPTURE IN A WAY
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REMINISCENT OF OTHER CASES IN THE PAST IN WHICH IT WAS LATER

PROVEN THAT PRISONERS HAD DIED AT OFFICIAL HANDS. DIAS FURTHER STATED THAT THE WRIGHT FAMILY, WHICH HAD RETAINED HIS LEGAL SERVICES, WAS WELL AWARE OF HIS VIEW AS TO PAULO STUART'S ILL-FATED END.

3. "DIAS STATED IT WAS HIS EDUCATED GUESS THAT WRIGHT MAY HAVE BEEN THE INDIVIDUAL REPORTEDLY KNOWN AS "ANTONIO" WHO PARTICIPATED IN A SHOOTOUT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENTS AND SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES IN RECIFE IN JULY OR AUGUST OF LAST YEAR. DIAS BELIEVED THAT WRIGHT, WOUNDED IN THAT EPISODE, BARELY ELUDED CAPTURE AT THAT TIME ONLY TO BE TRAILED TO SAO PAULO WHERE HE WAS APPREHENDED BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES SOMETIME BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1 AND 5. DIAS FURTHER SPECULATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN WRIGHT STEMMED FROM THE FACT THAT PAULO STUART HAD ASSUMED THE MANTLE OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE ACAO POPULAR MOVEMENT FOLLOWING THE EXILE ABROAD OF THAT ORGANIZATION'S CHIEF. AT THE TIME OF HIS CAPTURE, WRIGHT, ALONG WITH OTHER AP MEMBERS HAD CHARGES PENDING AGAINST HIM AS A SUBVERSIVE AND FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE. DIAS DESCRIBED AP AS A CLANDESTINE MOVEMENT, ORIGINALLY CHRISTIAN IN INSPIRATION, WHICH THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDED AS BEING COMMUNIST-DOMINATED AND SUBVERSIVE.

4. 'WHILE DIAS' STATED BASES FOR REACHING HIS CONCLUSION STRIKE US AS BEING HIGHLY SPECULATIVE, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO CHALLENGE HIS AND OTHERS' VIEW AS TO WRIGHT'S ULTIMATE FATE. AFTER WEEKS OF FRUSTRATING INQUIRY INTO THIS SUBJECT, CONGEN POLITICAL OFFICERS HAVE DISCOVERED NOT ONE SOURCE WHO HOLDS OUT ANY HOPE THAT PAULO STUART MAY STILL BE ALIVE. WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT WRIGHT'S FAMILY PROBABLY HAS DRAWN THE SAME CONCLUSION. END QUOTE
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